(c) In BCCL, cause of underground fire is basically unscientific mining activities done in the past.

In CCL, the reason for both the mine was spontaneous heating of coal.

(d) and (e) Efforts made by BCCL to combat the fires, are as under:

(i) During 1976-88, 22 fire projects dealing with fire were sanctioned by the coal company, for a total investment of Rs. 114.57 crores covering the then 58 fires out of 70 fires existing at the time of nationalisation.

(ii) Approximately sum of Rs. 76 crores has been spent in fire fighting measures against these fire projects till March 1997. The implementation of these schemes, though could not extinguish all the fires completely, but facilitated to achieve following:

- Liquidated 10 fires completely.
- Controlled majority of the fires from total devastation.
- Reduced the total surface area affected by fire to 8.90 sq. km. from earlier reported area of 17.32 sq. km.
- Reduced the blockage of coal from 1864 MT to 1453 MT.

Presently, as per the Master Plan for Jharia coalfield dealing with fire, subsidence, rehabilitation and diversion of surface infrastructure, approved by the Government in August 2009, an Action Plan has been prepared for dealing all 67 fires (58+9) and a total fund of Rs.2311.50 cores has been earmarked.

In CCL, Experts were engaged from Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research (CIMFR) for conducting detailed scientific studies immediately after detection of fires. The fire fighting measures were taken as per the guidance and under the supervision of the experts.

Closure of power plants due to short supply of coal

1837. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state whether it is a fact that many public and private sector power plants would be closed down because of short supply of coal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): As reported by the Central Electricity Authority, the coal stock at power plants improved from a level of 9.29 Million Tonnes as on 31st October, 2009 to 10.65 Million Tonnes as on 30th November, 2009. The number of critical power stations having coal stock of less than 7 days reduced from a level of 27 to 25 during the same period. It is expected that coal production and transportation are likely to improve further and therefore, closing down of power plants due to short supply of coal is not being apprehended.

Allocation of coal blocks to CIL

1838. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state: